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## House Panel Approves Bill Focusing on Combating Domestic Terrorism

By Caitlin Webber, CQ Staff

After little debate, a House panel on Tuesday approved legislation that would target homegrown terrorism by investigating the roots of radicalism and directing the Department of Homeland Security to confer with foreign counterparts on prevention strategies.

The Homeland Security Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment Subcommittee swiftly gave voice vote approval to the bill (HR 1955), which would aim to prevent terrorism by establishing research centers dedicated to the detection and prevention of internal terrorism threats.

“Domestic radicalization that leads to violence in the American homeland is one of the greatest emerging threats to the United States,” said Subcommittee Chairwoman Jane Harman, D-Calif.

The measure would create a temporary commission directed to analyze “homegrown terrorism and ideologically based violence” and report its recommendations to Congress and the president for combating such acts.

The so-called National Commission on the Prevention of Radicalization and Ideologically-Based Violence would be required to issue an interim report to Congress on the feasibility of a state grant program to prevent native terrorism threats.

The feasibility report, part of a substitute amendment adopted by voice vote Tuesday, is a departure from the bill’s original language, which would have authorized state outreach and social services grants for domestic populations at risk of committing terrorist acts.

Harman said the homegrown terrorism threat could come from “within prisons, the Internet or isolated populations.”

The bill would create a university-based “center of excellence” for the long-term study of homegrown terrorism. Such centers of excellence are annual recipients of federal funding and a favorite of lawmakers. Eight similar centers, which study areas such as disaster preparedness and risk analysis, already are affiliated with the Homeland Security Department.

The legislation would require the Homeland Security secretary to submit a report to Congress on best practices, drawn from the experiences of foreign countries, for combating homegrown terrorism.

Tuesday’s markup coincided with the release of the National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on global terrorism. Declassified portions of the report highlighted that “the operational threat from self-radicalized cells will grow in importance to U.S. counterterrorism efforts, particularly abroad, but also in the homeland.”

Calling the NIE release “extremely timely,” Harman said the report “signals a need for action.”

Ranking Republican Dave Reichert of Washington said the legislation represents a “first step toward the sharing of information and understanding of how people become radicalized.”

Harman said she was confident the measure would move expediently through the full committee. A markup was likely to be scheduled before the August recess, Democratic aides said.

“This measure is not only bipartisan, it is bicameral,” Harman said.

Susan Collins of Maine, the ranking Republican on the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, is expected to introduce a companion measure in the fall. F

*Patrick Yoest contributed to this story.*

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